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The Holy Spirit and Revival

BY HERBERT CARSON

IF this conference were being held on the other side of the Atlantic we would probably need to spend some time in establishing the particular sense in which we are using this term revival. In some circles in America the term has been used as virtually synonymous with an evangelistic campaign. Hence the strange conception, judged by our usage, of promoting and conducting a revival. But although we are in London and not New York, yet in view of the strong American influence on our thinking and use of terms, it is perhaps necessary at the outset to emphasize that we are not using the word revival in the sense of an evangelistic enterprise whether organized by a local church or by a wider grouping.

We use the term rather to describe a season in the life of the Church when God visits His people in an extraordinary way, pouring out His Spirit upon His Church and demonstrating His power in such a mighty fashion that both believer and unbeliever are compelled to acknowledge the presence of God. To quote Arthur Wallis in his book, *In the Day of Thy Power* : " Revival is divine intervention in the normal course of spiritual things. It is God revealing Himself to man in awful holiness and irresistible power. It is such a manifest working of God that human personalities are overshadowed, and human programmes abandoned. It is man retiring into the background because God has taken the field. It is the Lord making bare His Holy arm, and working in extraordinary power on saint and sinner ".¹

Wallis further quotes David Brainerd's description of the beginning of the movement of the Spirit among the American Indians in 1745 : " The power of God seemed to descend upon the assembly like a rushing mighty wind and with an astonishing energy bore down all before it. I stood amazed at the influence that seized the audience almost universally, and could compare it to nothing more aptly than the irresistible force of a mighty torrent. Almost all persons of all ages were bowed down with concern together and scarce one was able to withstand the shock of this surprising operation ".²

A similar description, this time of the beginning of the 1859 revival in Ulster is given by John Carson in a book whose apt title, *God's River in Spate*, is a fitting description of such a movement of the Spirit. He recalls a service at Tullyallen in County Armagh : " Strong men trembled and faces grew pale. Men could scarcely reach home when the services were ended, through weakness and anxiety, and many as they went were disposed to retire to some solitary place to pray. Such was the state of feeling produced on a great multitude in a few minutes. This was surely the powerful work of the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost. . . . The work of revival had now come. The attention of the community was quite arrested and the people spoke of little else but the Revival. The business of the world was, to a large extent,

laid aside ; religion seemed to take its proper place—the first place ; the salvation of the soul seemed to be the one thing needful ; many almost forgot to take their regular food being pale and weak. The great anxiety appeared to be ‘What must I do to be saved?’”³ As this was only typical of the stirring all over Ulster in 1859 we can quite understand the feeling of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church as he declared : “The scenes with which we are now happily familiar are almost without parallel in our historic records.”

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These brief accounts taken from the eighteenth century New England awakening and the 1859 Ulster movement are interesting and significant precisely because they describe a condition of affairs in the life of the Church which has been repeated in varied ways, but with an essential sameness, at so many different times. Read the journals of Wesley and Whitefield ; study Jonathan Edwards’ account of the awakening in Northampton, Massachusetts ; listen to reports of 1904 in Wales, or of the more recent movement in the island of Lewis—wherever you turn, and other illustrations could of course be cited, you find a striking similarity, when, to use a vivid phrase associated with such a time, “God comes down”.

At such a season the things of God become intensely real. Jonathan Edwards spoke thus of the situation in Northampton : “In the spring and summer of A.D. 1735 the town seemed to be full of the presence of God. It never was so full of love, nor so full of joy, and yet so full of distress as it was then”.⁴ Men become aware in a new way of the majesty and holiness of God. The law of God sounds with a convicting power which humbles sinners. Listen to the description of the impact of Jonathan Edwards’ famous sermon on “Sinners in the hands of an angry God”, and remember that Edwards was no shallow revivalist but a theologian and philosopher, preaching, not with some impassioned rhetoric, but with calm and relentless logic : “The assembly appeared bowed with an awful conviction of their sin and danger. There was such a breathing of distress and weeping that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence that he might be heard”.⁵

But with the experience of the forgiveness of sins there is also an intense awareness of the love and mercy of God, and a delight in the excellencies of the Gospel. To hear Whitefield testifying “my heart was full of God” is to listen to the testimony of multitudes. It is no wonder that these movements of the Spirit have issued in songs of praise, from the days of the Methodist hymns to the “Glory, Glory, Hallelujah” of the brethren in East Africa.

There is, too, a new knowledge of Christ. The Saviour is seen in all His many-sided perfections, His love, His power, His righteousness, His kindness, His compassion—such are the themes of preaching and praying as Christ in a new way ascends the throne of the hearts of His people.

Fellowship between Christians is another hallmark of a time of revival. The Methodist class meetings in which believers met to share experiences and to encourage one another were an outcome of the

movement of the Spirit in the eighteenth century. It may be claimed that the growth of these groups owed much to the work of John Wesley and his organizing gifts. But while in no way belittling Wesley's work, it is interesting to note that Grimshaw of Haworth seems to have been led independently along the same line. In any case these developments were but the flowering of the religious societies of the early eighteenth century, in which the Spirit had prepared His people for a new understanding of the meaning of fellowship. These Methodist groups like the Moravians in Germany were not primarily for study, but for a sharing of experiences—telling what the Lord had been doing for them in the previous week.

But a time of revival not only enriches the life of the Church, it compels the Church to be outward looking. Here, however, the evangelism comes with a new power. Instead of the sense of duty which so often prompts us in our witnessing, we find Christians speaking with a spontaneity to which formerly they were strangers. Having tasted the sweetness of forgiveness, and having seen the beauty of Christ, they cannot but speak the things which they have seen and heard.

Nor is such evangelistic outreach confined to the immediate area of the local church. A true revival inevitably leads to a concern for those further afield. It is no surprise therefore to discover the continuing impact of the eighteenth century awakening in the going out of Carey, the beginning of the Church Missionary Society, and the development of the modern missionary movement. The New England revival had the same consequences, witness the apostolic labours of David Brainerd among the Indians. So again when revival came in 1859 it brought a new impetus to the missionary movement of the nineteenth century.

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Now in this brief survey of some of the elements present in a visitation by the Spirit, we have been glancing at Christian history. But for the Christian, while a study of history is invaluable for seeing the outworking of the purposes of God, his ultimate appeal must be to the Scriptures. It is only thus that he is guarded against the danger of trying to erect a doctrinal superstructure on the basis of the experience of some individual or some church. Indeed in his study of revivals in the history of the church he will constantly seek to assess the various movements by the principles of Scripture. In his desire for a like movement in his own day he will again endeavour to conform his ideas to biblical patterns.

While of course our primary field of study will be the accounts in the Acts of the Apostles with the accompanying comments, warnings, and exhortations of the Epistles, we must not neglect the Old Testament, which has a great deal more on this matter than many seem to realize. Where could one find a more impassioned cry for revival than in the prayer of the Psalmist: "Wilt thou not turn again and quicken us that Thy people may rejoice in thee"; or in the great plea of Isaiah 64: "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence"; or again in Habbakuk (3:2): "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of

the years, in the midst of the years make known ; in wrath remember mercy " ?

To the Old Testament, too, we may turn for promises of blessing. " I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offering " (Is. 44 : 3). " Prove me now," says the Lord, as through Malachi he calls the people to bring the tithes into the storehouse—" Prove me now . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it " (Mal. 3 : 10). Is it not significant that in explaining the phenomena of the day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter turns to the promise in the prophecy of Joel : " And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh " (Joel 2 : 28) ? But the " last days " to which Joel refers are the days of Messiah, the times in which we now live. We may therefore feel that the promise of Joel has not been exhausted by the initial fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, but that throughout the time prior to the second coming we may expect further days of outpoured blessing, those " times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord " promised by Peter (Acts 3 : 19).

Even within the Old Testament itself we find examples of God visiting His people in a special way. While He was constantly with them to bless and keep them, there were seasons when His presence and power were manifest to an unusual degree. The days of Joshua seem to have been such a time, for no great contrast could be found than that between the stubborn sinfulness of the generation which perished in the wilderness and the people who assembled so readily to hear the Word of the Lord and who so quickly shewed their zeal for God in face of an apparent apostasy by the two-and-a-half tribes. Nor were such seasons of blessing unknown during the time of the kings. One can think of the solemn yet joyful covenant made in the days of Asa (2 Chr. 15), of the teachers going out from Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 17), rather like John Wycliffe's poor preachers in fourteenth-century England ; of the great passover feast in the reign of Hezekiah with the subsequent spirit of sacrificial giving among the people (2 Chr. 30). Turning from the bitter days of the exile to the time when God had restored the remnant to the land, we can scarcely read of the crowds standing in Jerusalem for hours on end to hear the reading and exposition of the law (Neh. 9) without acknowledging that God is again at work.

When we turn to the New Testament we encounter an objection. There are those who say that the term revival does not appear, nor are we ever commanded to desire or pray for revival. Now of course this is quite true. But surely the absence of the precise word is as secondary a question as is the absence of the word Trinity—which would seem to be a fair analogy. The question is not whether the actual term revival is present but whether the condition denoted by the word is there, and without any shadow of doubt such a condition is indeed present in the joyful Christ-centred living of the early believers ; in their warm-hearted fellowship, and in their deep concern to spread the Gospel.

And what of the other objection that we are nowhere commanded to seek for revival? The answer to this surely is that when people are actually experiencing revival they are not likely to pray for God to visit them. Rather, their whole attitude is one of praise. Hence, since the New Testament period is essentially one of high revival, we would not expect calls to seek revival. We would expect rather the type of warning and advice that are needed at such a time, and this is precisely what we get. Thus for example, the counsel given by Paul to the Corinthians is what one would expect in a situation where enthusiasm was in danger of bursting the bounds of decency and order. Incidentally it is a comment on our own condition, in contrast to the New Testament situation, that excess of enthusiasm is not usually one of our problems !

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We turn, therefore, to the present situation as it confronts us in the country at large and in particular in the parishes where God has called us to minister. The dangers to which we are liable lie at the two extremes of complacency on the one hand and despair on the other. There is a tendency among some of us to look at the more favourable aspects of the situation, and especially at any indication of evangelical strength and to feel that the future is ours. There is a tendency in other quarters, especially in areas where the going is hard, to feel that we are fighting a losing battle.

But both these attitudes are clearly wrong. No one looking at the sorry state of the Church, and the appalling spiritual and moral plight of the nation, could congratulate himself that all is well, or anywhere near well. Yet at the same time the Christian who knows that the Lord is King dare not slip into a defeatist attitude. What is called for is a sober realism which compels us to see our sorry plight, not in order that we might despair, but in order that we might be driven to cry to God with renewed earnestness. When the Lord bade His disciples : " Ask . . . seek . . . knock ", the story He used was that of the man at midnight hammering on the door with a persistence which refused to take " No " for an answer. Such importunity in prayer is, however, hardly likely to emerge unless we realize how desperate our condition really is. Indeed it may well be that the lack of deep concern for a fresh moving of the Spirit may be due to lingering traces of a false optimism which is spiritually so deadening.

There is a further reason why we, as Evangelicals, are in danger of failing to see the situation as it really is, and that is our tendency to erect a façade behind which we operate. We do this because of a strange mixture of misguided zeal and human pride. Thus we believe, and I trust in all humility, that the Gospel we preach is indeed the apostolic testimony. We believe, too, that this Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and that where Christ is uplifted men will be drawn to Him. Yet we know in our hearts that our Gospel is not making such an impact in the land. But to admit this frankly almost seems to be disloyalty to the cause. And so we present our evangelical front before the Church, hopefully displaying whatever evidence of blessing we can muster ; sometimes indeed slipping into the further snare of magnifying our achievements. What we need, surely, is a new

spirit of honesty in which we frankly and humbly acknowledge before God our own sinful failure. This is not pessimism, nor is it defeatist talk. It is frank realism which is the essential prerequisite for any earnest seeking of God's blessing upon us. It does not mean that we abandon one whit of the Gospel. We do not trim our sails to suit some new breeze. Rather we begin to examine ourselves before God.

Let us begin then with ourselves and humbly submit the quality of our own Christian living to the scrutiny of God's Word. Let us start alongside the Christians of the New Testament. Let us assess ourselves in terms of the quality of life manifest in days of revival in the Church. One of the most significant features of Apostolic Christianity was its preoccupation with the Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul wrote "to me to live is Christ" he breathed the very spirit of the early Church. And whenever God has visited His people this has been a characteristic. They have been gripped in a new way with the Glory of their Saviour. Hear Jonathan Edwards on the movement in New England: "In all companies . . . on whatever occasions persons met together, Christ was to be heard of, and seen in the midst of them. Our young people, when they met, were wont to spend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, the glory of the way of salvation, the wonderful free and sovereign grace of God, His glorious work in the conversion of a soul, the truth and certainty of the work in the conversion of a soul, the truth and certainty of the great things of God's Word, the sweetness of the views of His perfections, etc." (Any curate who has tried to deal with a brief epilogue appended to a youth evening would doubtless long to see a young people's fellowship of the Northampton type!) Edwards writes further: "And even at weddings which formerly were mere occasions of mirth and jollity, there was now no discourse of anything but religion, and no appearance of any but spiritual mirth".⁶ Let us be frank. Is this love for Christ seen among us? Does not our general conversation betray where we stand? We can discuss Christian doctrines, we can assess recent movements in the Church. But how often do we talk about Christ Himself and what He means to us? You will doubtless recall how John Bunyan was first aroused. He heard "three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun". Their conversation centred on what God had done for them and on the way He had visited their souls with His love in the Lord Jesus. Bunyan commented: "And methought they spoke as if joy did make them speak". Were Bunyan to eavesdrop on a group of church members or on a clergy fraternal would he find the same kind of conversation prevailing today?

Then again do we exhibit the joyfulness which characterizes a revived Church? We are in danger of confusing evangelical heartiness with Spirit-given joyfulness, but they are really far apart. How much do we truly know of the ecstasy described by the Apostle Peter where he speaks of "rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1: 8)? Or listen to Jonathan Edwards as he writes of the testimony of one of the converts in Northampton: "She had continued whole days and whole nights in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God, having enjoyed as much as her life could bear".⁷

Fellowship is a word that is widely used among us as a title for meetings of various kinds, or as a description of various forms of social activity, but how much do we really know of a fellowship which accords with the New Testament pattern? Where is the sacrificial love of the Macedonian believers, giving out of their poverty and beyond their means to help other brethren in need? Where is there the spontaneous coming together of the East African brethren with a readiness to share together in the things of God, whether it means acknowledgment of sin or the administering of a gracious word of reproof? Where is the warm love of the early Church which elicited the famous comment, "How these Christians love one another"?

And what of our missionary interest, in a day when there is an urgent need to buy up every opportunity while doors remain open? What a sad contrast there is between the comfortable affluence of our homes in this country and the niggardly contributions to the work of God overseas. How often, too, the cry goes up, "Where are the men?"—so that we force women into quite intolerable and unbiblical situations simply because, in our impoverished state, we are not sending men in sufficient numbers. It is a far cry from the days in Cambridge when, so universal was the desire to go overseas, that Handley Moule had to try and urge upon men the needs of the church at home.

But, I suppose, the supreme demonstration of our need for revival is our powerlessness. We organize, we devise many schemes, but still the bulk of the people are untouched. We preach, and, God knows, many of us are deeply concerned about our preaching, and yet we do not seem to see the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" of which Paul speaks. Where in these days is there the widespread conviction of men which made crowds cry out in anguish of soul on the day of Pentecost, "What shall we do?" Where is there a ministry like that of David Dickson at Irvine in 1625 with a hundred anxious inquirers waiting at the manse after a service? Where, in our children's work, do we see the situation like the school in Coleraine in 1859 when the whole building became a community of seekers? With all our discussion of north side and westward position—valid as this discussion is—are we seeing crowds flock to the Lord's Table as they did in Haworth under Grimshaw's ministry? Are men and women flooding into the Kingdom as they did in the Acts of the Apostles when the Lord added daily to the Church such as were being saved, or as the Lord did at Kirk of Shotts in 1630 when five hundred were converted at one preaching? And with all our advertising do we know anything of the compulsive power of the Spirit, such as they witnessed in the Isle of Lewis, when people were constrained by a supernatural power to rise from their beds and go to the Church? I recall Duncan Campbell describing the scene, with the obvious comment that when the Spirit is thus mightily at work we can dispense with advertising!

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If then we are in some measure at least aware of our need, how then should we be seeking for revival? At once we must begin with some words of caution as we try to learn from the experiences and the mistakes of God's people in the past.

In the first place, we must be careful about our motives. We are not discussing some new way of solving our problems. This is not simply an answer to empty pews and failure to attract the outsider. Nor is it a means of vindicating us and our evangelical position. Our concern must be with God Himself and His glory. Our grief should be that in these days of virtual apostasy in the Church, despite is done to the Gospel and God's name is dishonoured. We should, therefore, be desiring above all else that we might experience such a reviving that God's name might be glorified in and through a renewed Church, and that God's Gospel might be vindicated before an unbelieving world.

Then again we must avoid the danger of imagining that we can manipulate the Spirit of God. In our study of particular revivals we may notice that this or that feature has accompanied such days. We may then make the mistake, that some have made, of assuming that, if we carry out the pattern we have observed elsewhere, then we also shall have revival. We may have heard, for example, that in East Africa the movement of the Spirit has been accompanied by confession of sins, and we then reach the completely erroneous conclusion that if we engage in confession of sin the Spirit will do for us precisely what He has done there. But such a "press-button" approach is completely inappropriate in dealing with the sovereign moving of the Spirit of God.

Closely allied to this danger is the tendency to seek some experience. We read the history of revivals, or we read the biography of some great man of God, and we want that particular experience for ourselves. But such a quest, while it may seem very spiritual, is essentially carnal, for it is still man centred. What we should desire is God Himself. "Revival," as Philip Hughes has written, "comes from God and leads to God, that He may be 'all in all' and that man may learn that of himself he is nothing".⁸ This is but an echo of the Psalmist's prayer, "Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee"; or of the Apostle's burning concern to know Christ. A quest which is centred on some experience, rather than on God Himself, is but the pathway into a spiritual *cul-de-sac*.

We must, of course, beware lest our concern with revival leads us to neglect of our present responsibilities and duties. There are some, I believe, who are genuinely concerned about this discussion of revival, because they fear that a call to wait upon God for such a visitation may lead to a lessening of evangelistic concern now. Now we might answer this objection by pointing out that in the past, when God has revived the Church, it has led to an evangelistic outreach and a fruitfulness which has made the preceding period seem, by contrast, one of utter sterility. But we may, on the other hand, learn from the objector the very real danger of perverting our seeking for revival into a kind of escape from the present situation. We must not despise the day of small things. We must praise God for every evident sign of present blessing. We must rejoice at every convert received into fellowship. We must give ourselves to the task of preaching the Gospel. Yet at the same time, while not opting out of the demands of the moment, we shall be looking to God for still greater things.

Should God in His mercy thus visit us the need for words of warning

still remains, for two attitudes are possible, both of which are wrong. On the one hand it is possible to greet with suspicion any manifestation of new life which does not accord with our preconceived ideas ; and, on the other, it is all too easy to be swept into an acceptance of any and every claim as being truly of the Spirit. To those who are suspicious and reluctant to entertain any new manifestation of God's power the word of warning in 1 Thess. 5: 19 is apposite : " Quench not the Spirit ". To those at the other extreme who are ready to accept everything the discrimination of 1 John 4: 1 is required : " Beloved, believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God ".

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Turning from the words of caution to the more positive aspect of our quest, we must maintain, as an essential prerequisite, a humble acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God the Holy Spirit. The Spirit in the language of John 3 bloweth where He listeth. It is not for us to determine when or how He shall come. Revivals are not devised by man but come according to the sovereign ordering of the Spirit of God. This, of course, does not rule out our responsibility. As we shall see there are demands made upon us. But all our praying and seeking must be dominated by this controlling truth that the Spirit is sovereign in His working.

This sovereignty of the Spirit has been seen in His past dealings with His people. He has not always chosen to work in what to our way of thinking would be the strategic centres—the university towns or the capital. It was in obscure places like Haworth or Madely or Llangeitho or Olney that He came in the eighteenth century. It was to an equally obscure—or to many on this side of the Irish sea, an even more obscure place—that God came down in the Connor prayer meeting of 1859. It is in the remote Hebrides in our own day that God has shewn His power.

Nor does God always use the instruments we might expect. It is true that He has His spiritual giants—Jonathan Edwards, the Wesleys, George Whitefield—but sometimes He acts through those by whom the world and, indeed, the Church, sets little store. The four young men at Connor, the two old ladies and the elders of the Kirk in Lewis—these key figures in two revivals were instruments whose very obscurity demonstrated the grace and power of God.

The Spirit is sovereign, too, in His mode of operation. While there is a basic similarity, as we have seen, in all the various revivals, there is no stereotyped pattern. In each age the Spirit comes to His people in a way best calculated to meet the particular need of the Church at the precise time of His visitation. The sixteenth-century Church, in the midst of superstition and error, needed the powerful impulse of the Spirit to drive men back to the Word, and to quarry out the great truths of the Reformation. The eighteenth century, with the cold hand of Deism on the land, and with a dead orthodoxy in those churches which remained faithful, needed the fire and enthusiasm of the Methodist preaching and fellowship. In the nineteenth century it was a great new understanding of the meaning of praying together which characterized the Ulster movement ; while in this century in East

Africa it has been the demonstration of love and fellowship which has been so striking.

It is not, therefore, for us to prescribe the how or when of the Spirit's working. We can, however, be assured that He who honours His own Word will not work contrary to the principles of Scripture. Nor will He work contrary to His own ordinances and gifts, so that the sacraments and the ministry, far from being belittled, take on a new significance. But, of course, we must emphasize that it is the Word alone which is honoured, and not our ecclesiastical traditions which are liable to be shattered. It is a faithful ministry which is vindicated, but that is not the same thing as clerical self-importance, which needs to be deflated at any time, and in times of revival is so dealt with, sometimes in a painful way.

But, as we have said already, this emphasis on the sovereignty of the Spirit does not absolve us from our responsibility. The call of God is still as clear as it was in the days of Solomon: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chr. 7: 14). It was to a waiting and expectant group of disciples that the Spirit came in power at Pentecost. And again and again in Christian history it has been to a church, both diligent in using its existing opportunities for service and yet still seeking for deeper blessing, that God has come. Thus in sixteenth-century Germany the great outburst of new life under Luther had, as one of its sources, the family piety which was still maintained in many a German home, even in face of the prevailing deadness in the churches. In England, too, the leaven of Lollardy was still present in the land, preparing many a one for the tide of blessing which was soon to flow. Similarly the eighteenth-century awakening, with its Methodist class meetings, was preceded by the organization of the religious societies which in many parishes maintained a faithful remnant amid the general apathy. Then, again, prior to the 1859 revival in Ulster there had been the time of purging in the Irish Presbyterian Church, when Henry Cooke had led the resistance to the recrudescence of the old heresy of Arianism, reappearing in a nineteenth century dress. And in the Lewis awakening, Duncan Campbell has called attention to what had gone before, namely the solid and faithful preaching of the ministers of the churches in the island.

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In closing we may ask what, in the ultimate analysis, is the abiding significance of such a revival. Listen to James Buchanan: "Such a season of revival may be designed to manifest in an extraordinary way the continued presence and the active agency of the Holy Spirit—to demonstrate the faithfulness of God in fulfilling the promises of His Word—to evince the efficacy of believing prayer—to teach the Church the weakness of human instruments and the true source of all spiritual power—to quicken her faith and hope when through manifold trials and increasing difficulties she might be ready to faint and be discouraged . . . to stir her up to greater efforts in a spirit of lively faith and humble dependence and to afford new evidence to succeeding

generations that Christ is the exalted Head of the Church, and that all power is still given to Him in heaven and on earth".⁹

Brethren, our need is great ; but greater than our need is the power of our God. Let us then seek His face. Let us humbly acknowledge our present sorry plight as itself as evident token of His chastening hand upon us because of our coldness, our worldliness, our sinfulness. Let us turn then to Him with the plea of the Psalmist : " Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us for ever ? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations ? Wilt thou not revive us again : that thy people may rejoice in thee ? " (Ps. 85: 4ff.). And what is His reply to such a cry ? Surely just this : " He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? " (Rom. 8: 32). " Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

NOTES

¹ P. 20.² P. 22.³ P. 16.⁴ *Works*, Vol. I, p. 75.⁵ Wallis, *op. cit.*, p. 67.⁶ Vol. 1, p. 76⁷ Vol. 1, p. 106.⁸ *Revive us Again*, p. 11.⁹ *On the Holy Spirit*, p. 422.

The Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture

BY ALEC MOTYER

THE Church Catechism, as well as the general tone of evangelical thinking and preaching, has taught us that we believe " in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God ". That is to say, the Holy Spirit has been given an association with the holiness of the believer, or rather, with the believer's experience of holiness, which has almost excluded other functions ascribed to Him, and which has certainly distorted the perspective of biblical teaching on the Third Person of the Trinity. For, while the function of sanctification has been well ascribed to the Holy Spirit, the notion of sanctification has often been left undefined, and the general suggestion has gone abroad that the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the individual is mysterious in what can only be called a wrong sense of the word. Careful as we may be to safeguard the personality of the Spirit, the " electric current " view of His working is often the only implication of what we say. And we need to be careful that the present phase of evangelical thought does not succeed in placing the matter of revival in the same predicament, so that we begin to revere the Holy Ghost " who revives me and all the elect people of God " but leave the intellectual and moral dimensions of revival and of the Spirit's work undefined. We could conceivably find ourselves in the position where